

CONNECTICUT CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION, INC.



912 Silas Deane Highway
Wethersfield, CT 06109

Tel: 860.529.6855

Fax: 860.563.0616

ccia-info@ctconstruction.org

www.ctconstruction.org

House Bill 5250, An Act Concerning the Safety of Workers in Roadway Work Zones House Bill 5549, An Act Concerning the Penalties for Endangerment of a Highway Worker Transportation Committee February 4, 2013

Connecticut Construction Industries Association, Inc. (CCIA) represents various sectors of the commercial construction industry in Connecticut and is committed to working together to advance and promote a better quality of life for all citizens in the state. CCIA is comprised of over 300 members, including contractors, subcontractors, material producers, suppliers and affiliated organizations. Members of CCIA's Safety Committee serve as directors of safety for large and small construction companies across the state, and have a wealth of experience in work zone safety.

House Bill 5250, An Act Concerning the Safety of Workers in Roadway Work Zones, would implement changes in the statute to improve the safety of workers on roadways. CCIA supports House Bill 5250. Although the bill in concept form does not provide detail at this point as to what those changes would be, we would like to thank Rep. Morin, for introducing and sponsoring the bill, and also for his consistent advocacy for enhanced highway work zone safety measures.

House Bill 5549, An Act Concerning the Penalties for Endangerment of a Highway Worker, would amend the general statutes to allow the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles to suspend the license of anyone cited or convicted of endangerment of a highway worker. CCIA supports House Bill 5549.

Endangerment of a highway worker is defined in Connecticut general statutes as exceeding the posted speed limit by fifteen miles per hour or more, failure to obey traffic control devices erected for the purposes of controlling the flow of motor vehicles through such zone with several exceptions, driving through or around the work zone in any lane clearly not designated for use by motor vehicles, or physically assaulting, attempting to assault or threatening to assault a highway worker with a motor vehicle or other instrument.

Currently, the fine for endangering a highway worker is a fine of not more than \$500 if there's no physical injury and not more than \$1,000 if any physical injury occurs. We believe the severity of endangering a worker in a highway work zone warrants a more persuasive penalty than a monetary fine, and therefore support changing the law to allow the state to suspend a person's license under such circumstances. We support state



transportation officials for raising awareness of highway work zone safety and law enforcement officials for their vigilance on the road; however, based on repeated instances of infractions, injuries, and deaths in work zones, more needs to be done.

For example, during the Department of Public Safety's Big Orange Operation, in which the state police maintained statistics for speeding through work zones between April 2, 2012 and August 2, 2012 on various roads throughout the state, there were 883 speeding violations cited by law enforcement officials in work zones during that period, and of those, 7 were charged with reckless speeding.

Such figures call for more convincing measures to drivers that they need to pay attention and slow down in a work zone and, if they do not and violate the law, there will be severe consequences. The stakes need to be ratcheted up and a stronger enforcement mechanism needs to be applied. We believe suspension of a license for endangering the life of a highway work zone worker will deliver a much tougher message than the current fine system.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact John Butts at (860) 529-6855.